

WORKING GROUP ON A SINGLE ROMANIZATION SYSTEM FOR EACH  
NON ROMAN WRITING SYSTEM - Minutes of 1st meeting -  
6 March 1973

The Chairman reported on developments since the London Conference.

In his Circular No. 13 the current membership of the working group, and their responsibilities, were confirmed as follows:

Mr. Ayoubi	Arabic (Libya east)
Mr. Breu	Amharic, Greek
Mr. Dahlstedt	Somali
Mr. Radó/Mr. Földi	Bulgarian, Chinese, Mongolian, Korean (North Korea)
Mr. Geelan	Burmese, Maldivian (together with Mr. Sharma)
Mr. Komkov	Non-Roman alphabets of the USSR
Mr. Lapesa Melgar	Hebrew
Mr. Nédélec	Arabic (Maghreb), Cyrillic alphabets of Yugoslavia)
Mr. Page	Japanese, Khmer, Korean (South Korea, Lao, Thai
Mr. Sharma	alphabets of the Indian Group, Burmese and Maldivian (together with Mr. Geelan), Pashtu

Six further circulars had been distributed among the members of the working group, providing information as follows:

- a) new transliteration systems for Arabic officially adopted in Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia;
- b) development of a new transliteration system for Greek by a special commission in Athens, with representation from Cyprus;
- c) publication of a third revised edition of names specifications for the World Map 1:2,500,000;
- d) proposed adoption by ISO of the Hepburn System of romanization for Japanese (for bibliographical purposes);
- e) developments concerning the Ministry of Education System for Korean.

During the meetings of the working group at the fifth session, the following experts would attend as consultants: Messrs. Al Favez, Hadi, Kattan, Kazem-Vadie, Khamasundara, Kofos, Thipphayathat and Vayacacos.

Individual members and consultants reported as follows:-

- a) Arabic. Libya and Saudi Arabia had adopted, and Saudi Arabia was already using on 1:50,000 maps, the Beirut system of 1971 as adopted by the London Conference. In addition, Jordan and Egypt were thought to have accepted this system.

Dr. Burrill and Mr. Christopher reported difficulty in determining the exact form of the table that was agreed at London. It might be impossible to resolve this in the absence of Col. Ayoubi but an attempt would be made with the help of other Arabic experts present.

Regret was expressed that the four countries of the Maghreb had adopted four divergent transliteration systems. The Arabic group undertook to try, even at this late date, for a single system based on French phonetic conventions.

- b) Amharic. Situation unchanged.

- c) Greek. A special commission set up under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, with representation also from Cyprus, had produced a draft system of transliteration (Working Paper No.13). This system had been received provisional approval from the Ministry of Culture, pending an expression of views by the Group of Experts.

- d) Somali. The official adoption in 1972 of a new roman alphabet for the writing of Somali meant that this language was no longer within the competence of the working group as currently established. It was agreed nevertheless that the question of Somali should be kept under review pending a decision by the Group of Experts on whether the working group should be responsible also for writing systems and orthographies.

- e) Bulgarian. Situation unchanged.

- f) Chinese. The Hungarian expert reported agreement by the People's Republic of China with the proposals regarding Pinyin put forward by Hungary at the London Conference. China had also expressed interest in taking part in the future work of the Group of Experts. Meanwhile Hungary would pursue the question of a full Pinyin romanization key to Chinese characters.

- g) Mongolian. Hungary had established contact with the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, which had expressed general agreement with the transliteration system set out in E/CONF.61/L.108. One amendment to the system was proposed. There was a possibility also that the cyrillic spelling of Mongolian geographical names might yet need to be modified. Hungary would study these developments and submit a further proposal to the sixth session of the Group of Experts.

- h) Korean (North Korea). Indirect information had been received that North Korea ~~rejected~~ the McCune-Reischauer system. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~  
officially used

- j) Burmese. The United Kingdom expert reported that he had been able to find no information on current official romanization practice in Burma.
- k) Maldivian. The United Kingdom expert reported that he had no evidence of any official action in the matter of romanization by the Maldivian Government.
- l) Hebrew. Situation unchanged.
- m) Non-Roman alphabets of the USSR. The question of appropriate transliteration systems especially for the Russian alphabet is being actively studied in the U.S.S.R.
- n) Cyrillic alphabets of Yugoslavia. The problem of these alphabets had been resolved for all practical purposes by adoption of Resolution No. 6 of the London Conference.
- o) Japanese. Situation unchanged.
- p) Khmer. Situation unchanged.
- q) Korean (South Korea). The Ministry of Education System (finalized in 1959) has now been used in a gazetteer in which Korean and Chinese forms of the names, as well as romanization in the McCune-Reischauer system, are also shown. It is not known to what extent the Ministry of Education system is used cartographically in South Korea or accepted by other branches of the Government.
- r) Laotian. Situation unchanged.
- s) Thai. Situation unchanged.
- t) Indian alphabets. In the absence of Col. Sharma, nothing to report.
- u) Pashtu. No comparative study had yet been made, but see the report of the Iran Afghanistan Regional Meeting (Working Paper No. 14).

The Chairman said that subsequent meetings of the working group at the current session would continue with detailed studies as necessary, particularly in respect of Greek and Arabic.